

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

THE AUCHTERARDER CASE.*

"The Auchterarder case" has caused a high degree of excitement throughout the whole of Scotland, and has been viewed with considerable anxiety by theologians and politicians in England. The infidel, and other dissenting advocates of what is termed the "voluntary principle"—for system it cannot be called—on both sides of the Tweed will be full of glee at the idea of a "collision" between the religious establishment of Scotland and the State: and it is not to be denied that there is much cause for alarm to the Scottish Establishment in the present juncture of its affairs, brought on by this Auchterarder business.

There has been for a long time two parties in the Scottish Establishment denominated the High Church party and the Moderates. To Englishmen this will sound rather oddly; because, as the doctrine of the Episcopal or Apostolical succession, which is properly the distinctive mark of High or sound Churchmanship in England, is not held at all by the Scottish "High Church" party, English Churchmen will scarcely understand the Scottish distinction. But although the doctrine of the Episcopal succession, which is the only ground of all real Church authority, is not held, nor the thing itself possessed by the Scottish Establishment, yet Ecclesiastical power and authority is claimed by that body, even to entire independence of the State. Those who hold up this authority with a high hand are there denominated "High Churchmen," and it would seem that to them are opposed a large party, who desired to retain things as they were. Now previously to 1834 it had always been a grave charge against the "Moderates," and the Establishment, that the appointment of Ministers by the Crown, or by private patrons, was absolute or nearly so, and utterly irrespective of the wishes of the parishioners. Large numbers of persons seceded from the Establishment in consequence of this, and the "Moderates" in the Establishment, sided with the complainers without and within, and constantly urged an alteration which should give the people, if not the absolute choice of their Minister, yet a "veto" upon any appointment of a Minister, of whom they did not approve. After having been repeatedly canvassed the "low" party brought the subject forward in due form in the General Assembly of 1834, and carried their motion for giving to the majority of the male communicants of every parish a "veto" upon the appointments of the patrons of the livings. The majority of the patrons acquiesced in this encroachment upon their undoubted and acknowledged rights. But the Earl of Kinnoull, the patron of the parish of Auchterarder, on that living becoming vacant presented to it a Mr. Young, a gentleman whom, of course, he thought fit for the parish. The parishioners, however, thought otherwise, and in virtue of the power conferred on them by the General Assembly, the highest authority of the Establishment, gave their "veto" against the appointment of Mr. Young. The Earl of Kinnoull resisted their interference, and insisted on the induction of his nominee. The case was brought before the Presbytery of the District, and decision was given in favour of the parishioners and their "veto," and against Lord Kinnoull. The case ultimately went before the General Assembly, which confirmed the decision of the Presbytery. It was also carried into the Civil Courts, and arrived at length by appeal in the House of Lords, whose decision is of course final. That decision was in favour of the Earl of Kinnoull and Mr. Young; and consequently against the "veto" of the parishioners and the decision of the General Assembly. So that the House of Lords, the highest judicial of civil authority in the State, and the General Assembly, the highest ecclesiastical authority in the Church of Scotland, are directly pitted against each other; and which will ultimately prevail—for go on as they are they cannot—it is not very easy, nor, perhaps, all things considered, very difficult to guess. The General Assembly has just terminated its annual session, in which "the Auchterarder case" has been taken into the most grave consideration.—

*From the Church of England Gazette.

Dr. Cook moved to the effect that the Assembly should return to its custom, previous to the passing of the "veto" act; and thus, in reality, to set it aside. Dr. Chalmers moved that the Assembly should insist upon obedience to its decision; but as this would cause a "collision," he proposed the appointment of a committee to deliberate on some means of preventing it, preserving at the same time the rights of both parties. Dr. Muir made a motion of a medium nature between Dr. Cook's and Dr. Chalmers', and was seconded by the Earl of Dalhousie. On the division there appeared for Dr. Chalmers' motion against Dr. Muir's, 197; and for Dr. Muir's 161, leaving the former a majority of 36. Then for Dr. Chalmers' motion against Dr. Cook's there was 204; and for Dr. Cook's, 155; leaving a majority of 12. Dr. Chalmers' motion was, therefore, carried, much to the annoyance of the "high" party, who strongly condemn it as temporising.

The case, therefore, stands thus:—the Earl of Kinnoull presents Mr. Young to the parish, and the civil power supporting them, Mr. Young will receive and enjoy the income and temporalities of the parish; and the Assembly may appoint—and to follow up its decision it must appoint—another Minister to perform the spiritual functions of the parish, and must provide him with a salary or some means of livelihood in the best manner they can. But which of the two—the representative of Lord Kinnoull, or the representative of the Establishment, will have possession of the parish church we know not. And it is quite clear, that, supposing both parties to act with the greatest moderation, they must inevitably very much incommode and cripple each other in their operations; if they do anything at all. A division will take place in the parish, and may lead to a division in the establishment, and possibly its overthrow. As Episcopalians we should of course rejoice to see the Episcopal Church—the ancient and real Church of Scotland—restored to its former position, and to all those rights and privileges of which she has been long and most unjustly deprived. At the same time we would follow the example set us by our loyal sister in that part of the kingdom, and in obedience to "the powers that be," use no illegal or improper means to accomplish the overthrow of the Presbyterian Establishment of Scotland, but pay to it all rates and monies secured to it by the laws of the land.

Matters are certainly coming to a crisis in Scotland. The Earl of Dalhousie, in declaring to the Assembly that he would not act on Dr. Chalmers' committee, said, "that he was conscientiously attached to the Church (the Presbyterian Establishment) of Scotland, and hoped to die a member of it; but he should not again consent to sit in the judicatories of any Church which, gloss it as you may, has resolved doggedly, but virtually, to set at defiance the law of the land. *The Established Church of Scotland has now rung out her knell.*"

These are ominous words, but the same in amount as we almost involuntarily uttered at the moment of hearing that the Assembly, by their act of 1834, had given the parishioners a "veto" upon the appointment of Ministers. To ourselves, as firm believers in "THE ONE HOLY CATHOLIC AND APOSTOLIC CHURCH," which existed ages before Presbyterianism was heard of, and shall exist when Presbyterianism, and every other form of dissent, whether established by human laws or not, shall be no more, we can look with humble faith and confidence to the result. The Scottish Episcopal Church, which embraces nearly all the nobility and wealth of Scotland within its heavenly pale, is prospering under the superintendence of its pious and active Bishops and Clergy, while, in consequence of the numerous divisions, and the character of the proceedings of the General Assembly of Scotland, their "*Church has rung out her knell.*"

Select Sentences.—We are surrounded by the heavens on every side, let this teach us not to confine our attention to the earth; man should look unto the Lord, and have respect unto the Holy One of Israel.

Consider well who you are, what you do, whence you came, and whither you are going.

INTELLIGENCE.

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

57, Lincoln's Inn Fields.
JUNE, 1839.

The following are the resolutions forwarded by Mr. Wigram:—

Proposed by the Earl of Chichester, seconded by the Lord Bishop of London.

1. "That it is an object of the highest national importance to provide, that instruction in the truths and precepts of Christianity should form an essential part of every system of education intended for the people at large; and that such instruction should be under the superintendence of the Clergy, and in conformity with the doctrines of the Church of this realm, as the recognized teacher of religion."

Proposed by the Lord Abinger, seconded by the Lord Bishop of Salisbury.

2. "That the incorporated 'National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church,' by the formation of numerous schools in immediate connexion with the Church, has rendered eminent service to the cause of Christian education; and that the general principles upon which it was originally founded ought still to be adhered to in every plan for extending more widely the benefits of education, whether by multiplying National Schools, or by enlarging the circle of instruction in those which already exist."

Proposed by the Rev. Dr. Hook, seconded by the Lord Barrington.

3. "That this meeting contemplates with satisfaction the Establishment of the Diocesan and local Boards of Education in connexion with the National Society, having for their object the extension of the benefits of education, contemplated in the foregoing resolution, as well as the establishment and encouragement of schools for the education of the middle classes upon principles conformable to those which are embodied in the Society's charter."

Proposed by the Dean of Chichester, seconded by R. Bethell, Esq. M. P.,

4. "That, in order to supply one of the principal defects which at present limit the operations of the National Society, and retard the improvement of education throughout the country, efforts should be made to raise the qualifications of those persons who are employed as teachers in our Parochial and National Schools; and that the resolution, adopted by the National Society in August last, to establish a training Institution for the Education of young persons intended for that office, is calculated to promote the attainment of this object."

Proposed by the Archdeacon of Salop, seconded by Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, Bart. M. P.,

5. "That, in order to furnish the National Society with the means of establishing a Training Institution, and generally extending and improving the Education of the Poor, an immediate exertion be made to increase its resources, and that the Committee of Inquiry and Correspondence be requested to act as a Committee for the purpose of soliciting and collecting subscriptions, with power to add to their numbers."

The Secretaries then stated, that the Standing Committee, have taken the object into their consideration, recommended that at the General Meeting in July the sum of 5,000*l.* should be granted by the Board, in furtherance of the objects set forth in these Resolutions.

"The Humble Petition of the undersigned Members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,
"Sheweth,

"That the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was the first Society in the kingdom which came forward to advocate and support the general education of the people; and that, from its first establishment in the year 1698, it has endeavoured, by all the means in its power, to promote religious instruction upon the principles of the Church of England.

That whilst your Petitioners disclaim all interference with the education of those who differ from them in their Religious principles, they are of opinion that the authority of the State ought not to be given to any scheme of education which involves principles contrary to the constitution of the Church, as established by the laws of the land.